

# LIMERICK SOCIALIST

SEPTEMBER, 1975.

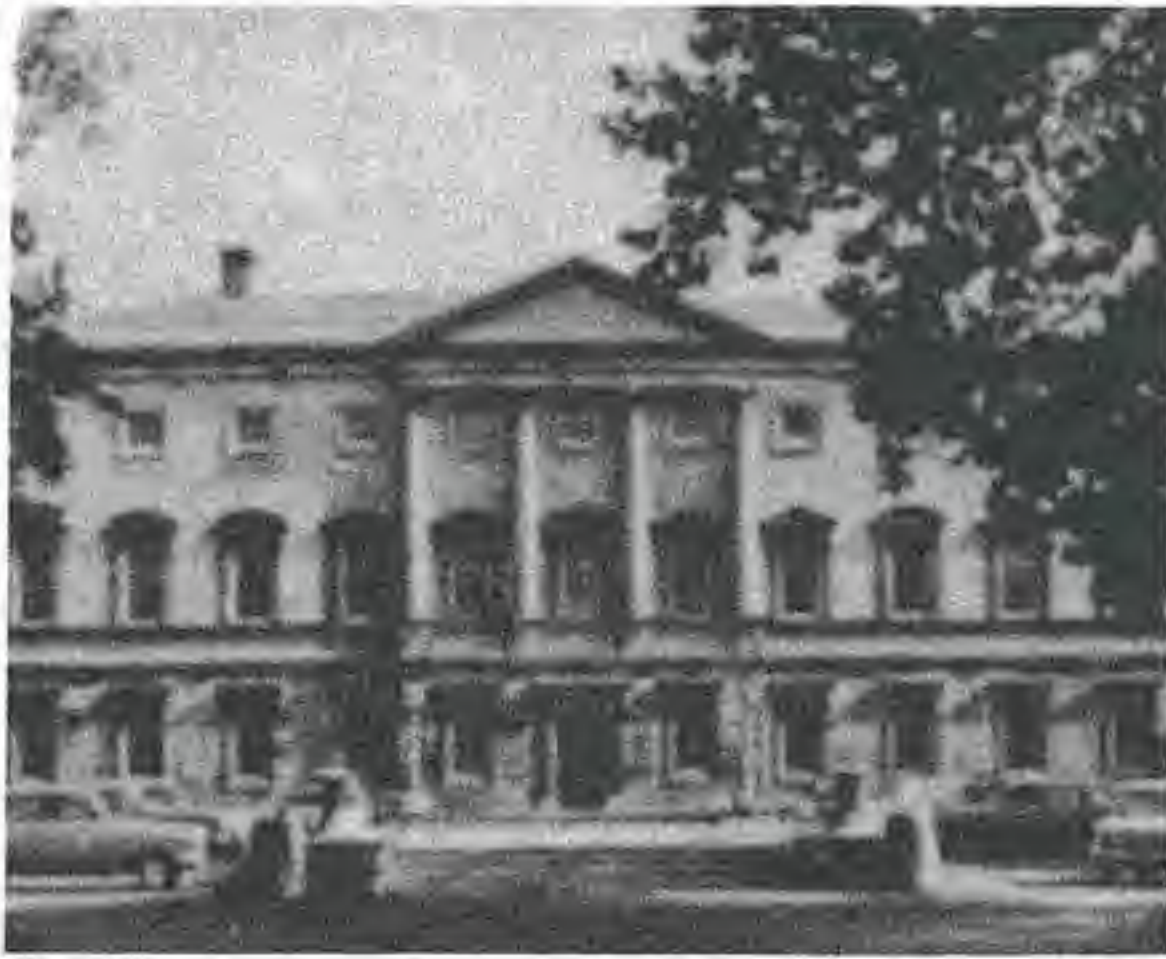
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VOL. 4. NO. 9.

THE  
VOICE  
OF THE  
WORKER

That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic . . . James Connolly

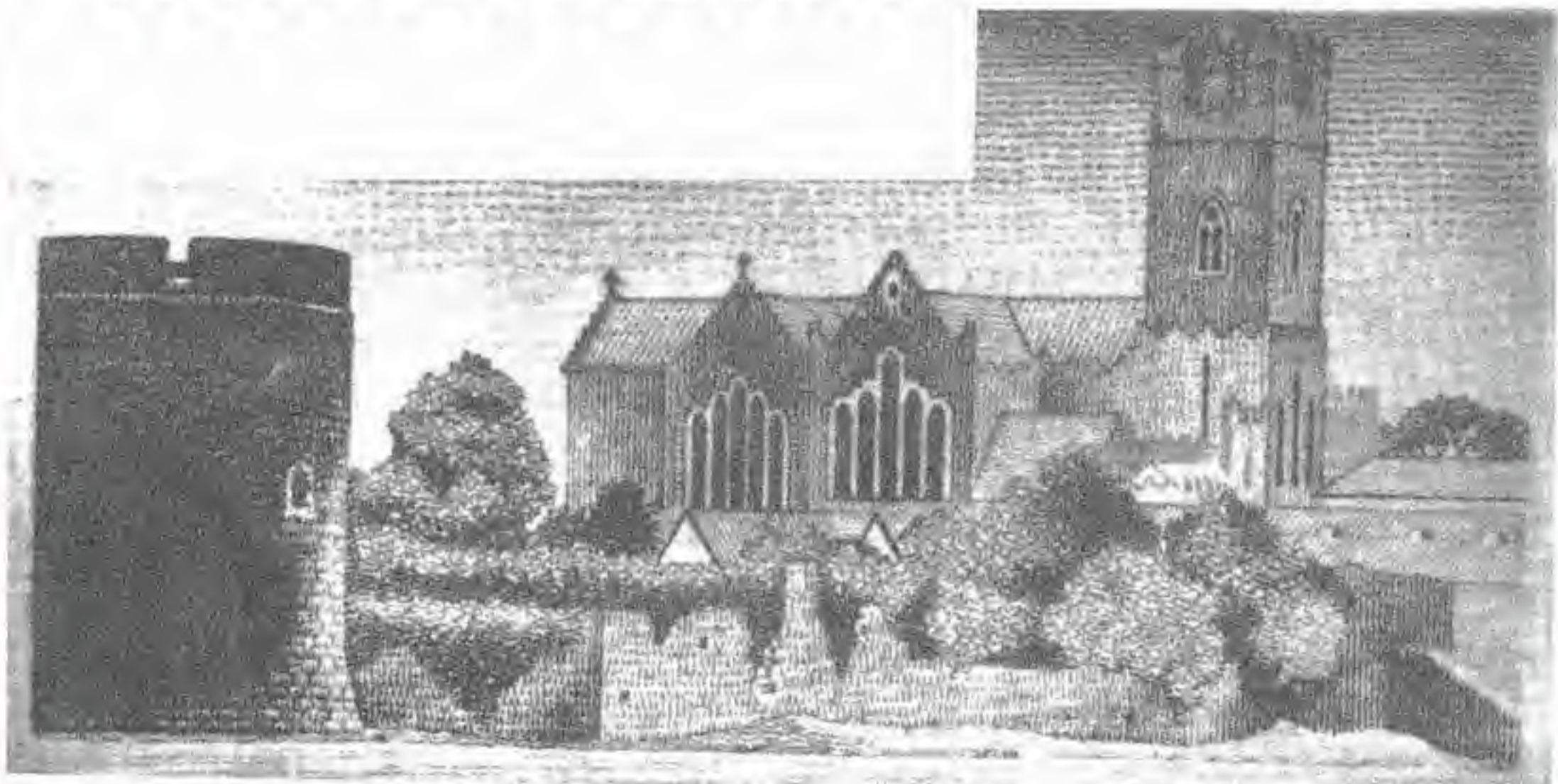
## The Establishment



## LEST WE FORGET



## THE FOURTH SIEGE OF LIMERICK





# The Fourth Siege of Limerick

It is remarkable that in the various accounts of the 1916 affair, the words "traitor", "treachery" and "informer" do not occur. This is contrary to human nature where so many men were involved. It is contrary to the pattern of Irish history which abounds in traitors, treachery, and informers.

In Limerick, the Military Commander acted on the assumption of an imminent rebellion. In Dublin the Military Command acted on the assumption of a non-rebellion. The published notice by McNeill cancelling all manoeuvres would not deceive a competent military commander into inaction but would provoke his suspicion and protective measures. Who then could inform the British that there was to be no gory rebellion but a confrontation in numbers, a repeat of the Grattan manoeuvre of 1779 when his Protestant Volunteers confronted a Protestant Irish parliament in College Green and by the implied threat of violence compelled the parliament to pass a Declaration of Independence which was as high falutin' as those many declarations of Independence and Republics have been. Contemporary opinion of 1916 scorned the notion that a group of English, Scottish, Welsh and other aliens without a perch of land or a stake of any kind in the country had conspired together in a suicide pact of defiance against Britain in order to free the country from British rule.

The British and Irish press condemned the rising with gusto and vigour. The Irish press editors and staffs were well informed on all aspects and motives of the rebellion, public bodies were equally forceful in their condemnation. All the speechifying, flagwagging and parades permitted and observed by the police now paid dividends. Throughout the country the police arrested every known and suspected Volunteer. The men were placed in internment camps in Ireland and Britain, for many of them it was the first time that they had left their parish or country. Within three months most of the internees were released and returned to their homes. In Limerick about two hundred men were interned and released.

Three months after the rebellion on Thursday 20th, of July, the City Council of Rebel Cork convened a meeting to congratulate the British Admiral Jellicoe on the defeat of the German navy at the battle of Jutland. Before the meeting could get on with the agenda, hundreds of young men invaded the Council chambers and, amid scenes of disorder and violence, broke up the meeting and dispersed the Councillors. This was the first public act of violence and protest by Sinn Fein, the organisation founded by Arthur Griffith of Dublin and strengthened by Michael Collins of Cork with the formation of the Irish Republican Army. From now on there would be no more parades in colourful uniforms, no flagwagging, and no high falutin' oratory. Sinn Fein (We Ourselves) would be a totally Irish organisation. All aliens and their friends would be suspect and kept out of the organisation unless they could be used in some way but they would never get within sight or sound of the inner council of the Irish Republican Army.

That lustful old Welsh solicitor, David Lloyd George was Prime Minister of Britain from 1916 until 1922.

He was the leader of the Liberal party. In that age the term "Liberal" was today's equivalent of the permissive society. George had pretensions to Welsh Nationalism and Celtic scholarship. He spoke Welsh. He was known as the "Demon Lover of Downing Street". The most confidential documents of the British cabinet were typed by his secretary—typist paramour.

From the gaols and slums of Britain, George collected some thousands of mobsmen and hoodlums and sent them over to Ireland to assist the R.I.C. in restoring British law and order. The hoodlums were dressed in an R.I.C. men's bottle-green

tunics and British soldiers' trousers; because of this mixed uniform they were called the Black and Tans. Months later, George sent over a corps of ex-officers of the British Army, who were suave, ruthless butchers. This latter corps of butchers were called the Auxiliaries: they were to assist the Tans if the latter found any assignment repugnant to their elastic consciences. This second body of grenade-tossing bravados, the Auxiliaries, were called "Auxies" for brevity.

The Tans arrived in Limerick in March 1920. Little notice was taken until one of them was punched in a pub. An hour later, they emerged from their several barracks firing their rifles and striking all around them. The "Tan Terror" had begun.

Country people came into the city to look at them; later the Tans courteously returned the compliment. They went out into the country and established posts in harmony with the R.I.C. occupying the same barracks. From that time on life in the country became days of horror and nights of terror.

In the three years between 1918 and 1921, almost thirty political murders were committed in the city. Most of the killings of British forces were inadvertent; they were neither planned nor authorised. Two I.R.A. men coming into the city, fearing that an approaching R.I.C. man was about to arrest them, shot him dead. They were summoned to a court of their officers and were reprimanded for their unauthorised act. The two men expressed their contempt of the court saying: "There are too many papersoldiers in the I.R.A.". They told the three officers of the court that "gun play was better than word play" and that should the court disagree the members of the court would be next for the cemetery. As the two men now had notches on their guns, the court listened with respectful deference to the words of wisdom.

Three other men held up some British soldiers in a pub and made off with their rifles; they also were reprimanded for their spontaneous act. Five men held up two R.I.C. men in the People's Park and disarmed them. The R.I.C. were aware of the identity of those five men but waited two hours before reporting their loss at William Street Barracks, and disclaimed any knowledge of their attackers. The five men were abused for their daring acts and were ordered not to do the like again without authority. With such leadership and example, the men were in greater danger from their own officers than from the British forces.

Following the incident in the park, three tenders of Tans arrived at the park gate in Edward Street. They fired several volleys into the Park and up Edward Street, where they wounded a Tan who had come out of Edward Street Barrack to discover the cause of the shooting. The Tans then fired several more volleys up Carey's Road and wounded five people.

The Tans returned to William Street Barracks and, having obtained sledge hammers, axes and crowbars, they came again into Carey's Road. Starting on the left hand side of the road they broke down every window and door and wrecked the interior of the houses. There was joy in every stroke of the sledges; happy were the axe-men, as with notable craftsmanship they smashed the lustre jugs and furniture. Some people on the right of the road were laughing at the orgy of destruction until the Tans, having reached the end of the road, by the

railway bridge, crossed over and repeated the destruction on that side. Because of their craftsmanship with the axe, few people remaining in the houses dared to resist or protest. While this orgy of destruction went on, the British soldiers in the New Barracks remained in the barracks.

All horse and cattle fairs in the country were banned, yet several hundred farmers brought horses into the city for a Fair held between William Street and the Fair Green. Several lorry loads of Tans firing their rifles and revolvers charged into the

mass of men and animals. The terrified animals surged around kicking and screaming and stampeded in all directions. Another mob of Tans with ash-plants, laid in to any loiterer or anyone who protested against their loss. All those acts of violence by the Tans were carried out with happy carefree abandon. They laughed joyously, shouted obscenities and sang lewd comic songs. They were free from any fear of disciplinary action against them.

(To be continued).

# THE ESTABLISHMENT

BY JOHN CASEY

The establishment, including the politicians themselves, do not respect the parliament which they pretend to believe to be the cornerstone of democracy. This can be seen, in a regular basis, by their non-attendance and by the public-house quality of much of the debate when they do attend. It is essentially a tool of the financial establishment whose attitude towards it is best illustrated when its real interests are threatened, or seem to be.

It was not long after the election of the Fianna Fail government in 1932 when the Blueshirts and the Army Comrades' Association made their appearance. The Cumann na nGael party and their backers fearing in their innocence and ignorance that De Valera was a radical (contrary to popular belief capitalists are usually conservative) decided that if they couldn't get power through the ballot-box they'd get it with the iron fist, Fascism was not helped by their choice of leader (O'Duffy was an ignorant lout and could only get the support of his own kind and was defeated by mass trade union antagonism and by the tenacity of the Irish Left. So the Cosgraves, the O'Higgins and the Costelloes put their blueshirts in mothballs. Everywhere the pattern repeats itself. If a socialist government comes to power, fascism will surface: Spain in 1936, Diem and a succession of crypto-fascists in Vietnam and Pinochet in Chile.

Why then if the Dail is a plaything of the establishment should we advocate the election of socialists to it? There are a number of reasons. The majority of people still believe in it and, since they are only given a voice every four years, we have a duty to put before them tribunes of the people. Secondly, the country cannot afford three conservative parties: there must be an opposition to reveal their falsehoods and hypocrisies. Within the present system even a few dedicated socialists in the Dail can influence reform, represent individuals and air popular grievances. Finally and most important of all, it is a forum for propagating Marxism — bringing a Marxist analysis to contemporary political situations.

This is why it is important for the left to come together and put forward agreed candidates in the next election. Men whose commitment is doctrinaire and unquestioned, whose political credentials are unimpeachable. The election of three or four Marxists to the 21st Dail would be most significant.

The present Dail has no socialist voice: Dr. Noel Browne's hasty and emotional decision saw to that. Browne's impetuosity, narcissism and indiscipline have made him unfit for leadership though still worthy of support due to his courage and unquestioned commitment. Within the two largest Left-wing parties, — the Communist Party and the Official Movement, there are a number of professional revolutionaries, many dedicated people but also opportunists and within the

Officials, some criminals. The latter should be weeded out: the opportunists identified. Broadly speaking the forces for radical change (as of now) are to be found in these and a few smaller groupings. The Provisional Alliance is about as revolutionary as Bishop Lucey: they, like him, believe in a 32-county Catholic state — Gaelic speaking, ceili dancing and sex once a month.

The election of socialists to the Dail (Labour Party deputies are not socialist, at the best they're social democrats, at the worst, Stevie Coughlan) is important in preparing the way for the socialist republic. In spite of the sneers of John A. Costello at the unattainability of a workers republic, it will come. Costello's grandchildren will learn to plough and weed the land that they and their ilk have fattened on. The Irish gentry played tennis and ate cucumber sandwiches while their world disintegrated; the bourgeoisie play golf and drink gin and tonic, deaf to the social tremors.

The capitalist system has within it the seeds of its destruction: it is a great rotting carcass from which the dogs tear chunks ever so often. Watergate was a manifestation of its sickness; the present economic slump is another sign. Its disintegration and replacement is certain. Only the time is uncertain — 10, 20, 50 years. Fate, the development of political consciousness, the pace of disintegration of the old system — all these will decide the time. One must be on guard against instant revolutionaries; these are often agents provocateurs or politically immature people or self-seeking agitators. Experience has taught socialists to be very wary of these people: they are often the enemy within.

It is for socialist leaders to guide, and point the way towards a workers' state. The people have been brainwashed for years by the establishment and the churches with anti-socialist propoganda. It is time that the true gospel was propagated, to clear away the clouds of ignorance and nail the lies of the capitalists and their parasites. The *Limerick Socialist* has been doing valuable work in awakening political consciousness in Limerick and the editor and the Limerick Socialist Organisation deserve every support. The inequities of the system must be brought home to all — workers, soldiers, the lower middle class. In time the lower middle-class who are already awakening to the fact that they are exploited and who will within a few years reject the establishment parties, will come to be the cement of the workers' republic. The Cosgraves and the Donegans have always been careful to keep the army on their side. The officers are vetted and chosen for their conservatism and dullness. The N.C.O.'s and privates are brainwashed by the officers, who are almost without exception of middle-class and farming backgrounds, and flattered by the politicians who try to ingratiate themselves (notice Donegan's jackassing around in army camps).

The army must be politicised. We want our revolution with Guinness and roses but it would be reassuring and helpful to have the army on our side.

# BEST WE FORGET

by DERMOT McEVOY

DE VALERA, we are told on all sides, with the exceptions of the Taoiseach, Liam Cosgrave, and the former Taoiseach, John A. Costello, was the embodiment of Irish nationalism and the austere statesman of grave utterance. For my money he was an autocrat capable of disastrously wrong decisions from which Ireland has suffered since 1921 – and is suffering. Nothing can efface his encouragement of the Civil War that nearly strangled the infant Free State whose foundation was approved by a majority of the Dail and accepted by a sizeable majority of the people. In this respect, as in many others, he showed an invincible sense of his own righteousness: 'To know what the Irish people want, I have only to look into my own heart' HIS Civil War and the animosities that flowed from it bedeviled Irish politics for four decades and retarded the development of the country. Even when the Irish Army (pallbearers at his funeral) wiped the floor with his Irregulars he declined to surrender, merely ordered his followers to dump their arms. From those very dumps today's Provos started their personal terror campaign, sporadically in the South, continuously in the North, Another Cosgrave has yet to clean up that bloody mess.

Dev's taking of the Oath ('an empty formula' he was to call it after all the blood, rapine and werckage) showed how he could turn his coat and justify it with dialectical refinement. Not that he convinced Sinn Fein; its irreconcilables remain irreconcilable, albeit split once more into Kevin Street and Gardiner Place, a legacy for which they can thank The Chief. In office, surrounded by all the institutions he had fought to destroy, he was quick to throw into jail – and sometimes execute the irreconcilables he had but lately led and encouraged. As the London *Times* laconically records: "There was a bleak integrity and refusal to count the cost about many of his actions". Any elderly farmers will tell you the cost of de Valera's Economic War when calves were slaughtered in hundreds of thousands for the £1 a head taxpayers' bounty. (This was at a time when the IRA of the day, nettled by some remark of Colonel Gretton M.P., of Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton, was going around the pubs smashing shelves of the Great Stuff in the belief it was helping Cathleen Ni Houlihan). In a withering speech in the Dail exposing this 'bleak integrity', Paddy McGilligan concluded: "Why doesn't Mr. de Valera combine the two campaigns, launch the calves into eternity by hitting them on the head with a bottle of Bass?" The sally brought just a wan smile to the habitually frozen-faced de Valera.

The only joke of Dev's I remember could be classed as the joke of a dictator. Through sheer argumentative stamina and liberal quotations from the Abbe Sieyes (the cleric who when asked what he had done during the French Revolution replied 'I survived it'), De Valera had abolished the Senate as an unnecessary arm of the Oireachtas. Two years later, using all the Opposition arguments, he was back advocating its restoration. It was a piece of apostasy and double-talk that caused James Dillon to interrupt. "Now, we're all one" and Dev to deliver his joke:

Deputy Dillon's remarks remind me of the bridegroom returning from the altar who, for the sake of something to say, turned to his bride and said 'Now, darling, you and I are one'. To which she replied: 'And I am the one'.

As I said, the joke of a dictator; Dev just could not be wrong – or at any rate would never admit it. The same with his 1937 Constitution and its 'special place' for the Catholic Church – an Article since abolished and no great harm has befallen Church or country. At the time, the late Frank McDermott argued cogently against the ultimately divisive nature of this Catholic-Irish language Constitution. There was no reply; no doubt Dev had looked into his own heart and that was that. For his obstinacy we are reaping the whirlwind today. And where is the Irish language, where is the Algebra through the

medium? Of what use was it all to the half-educated youth who took the emigrant ship? No monument there.

De Valera's only monument, brass-faced rather than *aere perennius*, is Fianna Fail, a skulking Mafia with its jobs-for-the-boys ethos. (One sample of the nature of this: the appointment of Liam Forde, one of Dev's Irregulars, as Inspector of Shannon Fisheries. His qualifications, apart from his 'national record' as a trigger-man, were encapsulated in his letter of application. "Moreover, I like fishing". But then I like fish' would have been adequate). Yet another monument to Dev's Fianna Fail is to be found in the research done in 1972 by Dr. Patrick Lyons, of Trinity College, which shows that *over two-thirds of the wealth of this country is owned by 5 per cent of the population* and that over 70 per cent of the adult population owns no net wealth at all. No, I shall not let the dead rest. Remember Dev's dying kick: his 1959 attempt to alter his own Constitution by substituting for proportional representation the British system of simple majorities in single-member constituencies, more favourable, he felt, to his own Fianna Fail. Was this the act of a statesman of *gravitas*, this attempt to confuse a constitutional issue with his own undoubted prestige on the very day he was seeking election as President? Yes, he was duly elected President but, thanks to the growing intelligence of the urban electors, proportional representation remained. Regrettably, the Irish Army's salute of 21 guns at Glasnevin is not the last of de Valera, the bombs and guns of Caterham and Oxford Street, of Belfast and South Armagh are still baying out in vengeful salute. For his equivocation with all the shades of republicans, de Valera will have to plead with Charon but let the workers (and the workless) of Limerick remember:

His honour rooted in dishonour stood

And faith unfaithful made him falsely true.

Fortunately, de Valera (just like the rest of us in due course) has had to bow out. As Horace put it aeons ago, *pulvis et umbra sumus* (we are but dust and a shadow). I don't look into *my* heart to know what the Irish people want, I prefer to rely on my head: the Irish people just want a fair share out of the bread that's going round. Which is something they did not get from de Valera or his precious Fianna Fail. Let's not forget.

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FIRST item on my diary of things to remember is the 17-hour interrogation of Michael Murphy at a Limerick Garda station and the accompanying beating-up he alleges. There has not been a squawk from Chief Supt. John Kenny, part of whose duty it is – or should be – to supervise what goes on in the stations in his command. I would have thought he'd have found time by now to reply to the serious charges made by a Limerick citizen. Similarly, Mayor Thady, First Citizen – at any rate until a proper election comes round – has cocked a deaf one. Likewise, the *Limerick Leader*, which, in an off-moment no doubt, allowed itself to publish these serious charges by Murphy. Are they all mute of malice? So unlike Jeremiah Buckley, a real Limerick leader, who went to jail for telling the truth at the turn of the century. If Thady and Speechless Steve think I'm going to drop this campaign for simple justice for a Limerickman, they've got another think coming. Elections have a habit of recurring and Murphy and his men will want to know the reason why.

Meanwhile, I hope to organise a largish deputation of hurlers, men with hurleys will do, to call on Supt. Kenny and give him a chance of explaining his silence. A peaceful deputation, of course, so there's no call for the Superintendent to surround himself with Gardai on overtime (£7,000-a-year-men according to the *Sunday Independent's* last statistical run down). The hurley sticks, let me remind Supt. Kenny, are for use only if some Special Branch heavies

should try to beat up the members of the deputation with the wooden club used on Murphy who is, so far, at large and presumably innocent. One way or another Supt. Kenny is going to retire hurt – or come clean.

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AFTER men, or what passes for them, let us turn to money. The Kruger-rand is on the slide, the man with the gold lavatory seat I told you about is feeling the cold at his rear end and Terry Rogers the glass-hard bookie, has growing doubts about the stability of the Cayman Islands as a tax haven. (Perhaps Terry will now turn for advice to Steve Coughlan whose intelligence he lauded in an *Irish Times* advertisement recently? How did Terry gauge the intelligence with a yardstick or a measuring glass?). My Lord Petersham stays lost to the Limerick economy, driven into exile by our penal tax laws. But, stay, there's an odd pleasant circumstance: My Lord Iveagh, a Liam Cosgrave Senator, is giving up the chairmanship of Guinness because United Kingdom tax laws make it financially "intolerable" for him to carry out his duties in London. The Earl, product of Eton and Cambridge, finds it handier to stay in Ireland at Knockmaroon, Castleknock, Co. Dublin, and, natch, more rewarding. I feel in my water he should have a word with Lord P. Perhaps he'll persuade him to come back? God knows after Guinness we need a P.

Last time I was in Knockmaroon – in the absence of the reigning Guinness – there were black silk sheets on my double bed, an encouragement to eroticism I was told. At the time I needed no such adventitious aids. Sadly, I could use them now but I never find a randy Guinness scion to invite me to Knockmaroon, or anywhere else for that matter. Ah, well, c'est la vie.

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AS you continue to praise Richie Ryan and Brendan Corish for upping the dole and the Old Age Pension, spare a moment to reflect on the true worth at today's prices of the handouts to the workless and the weak. From the Fabian Society pamphlet *Inflation and Low Incomes* you get all the insight you need (just allow that U.K. inflation is somewhat less than the home-grown variety and that benefits are higher): The £10 weekly rate of benefit, introduced in July 1974, was worth only £8.83 by March 1975. Even after the uprating to £11.60 in money terms at the beginning of April, the value in the middle of May was as low as £9.46 at July 1974 prices, or 54p less. Supplementary benefits were also lower, the long-term rate for disabled and sick people being 61p lower in real terms in May (i.e. shortly after the up-rating) than in July 1974.

The pamphlet, by the economist Peter Townsend and others, goes on to refer to the new U.K. rates of social security benefits, which are to be introduced in late November, and comments:

The single rate, which is to be increased in money terms to £13.30, will be worth, at present rates of inflation, only £9.47 at July 1974 prices and even if inflation decelerates sharply it is still certain to be worth less than the £10 July 1974 weekly rate of benefit; and each month from then on, throughout the depths of the winter, the real value of the pension and other benefits will be getting less and less.

Consider again that Irish benefits are less than British and that our inflation rate is higher and your praise of Messrs. Ryan and Corish will be muted. But, of course, there is another side of the coin. I find that an examination of the accounts of Smurfits, the Irish conglomerate, reveals no such grim outlook. Old Jonathan Smurfit has seen to it that his two fine Irish sons won't be relying on social welfare: they divided £400,000 last year, much of it from the renting of TV sets through the agency of Kilroy Brothers, a wholly-owned subsidiary. Kilroy is here – with a vengeance. How do you recognise a young Smurfit? Easy, their purring limousines have not only windscreen wipers but small wipers as well to keep the headlamps clear. This is so they won't run over any poor native; they'd rather walk on him. Of course, the Smurfits have their allies. Fianna Fail Senators Brian Lenihan and Michael Yeats fought the rather mild Wealth Tax that might make the Smurfits hand back a little of their loot to help pay for social welfare. On the subject of the same Wealth Tax, no

Labour T.D. had a word to say in the debates. No, not even Stevie Coughlan; he was, as usual, speechless. When election time comes round get your own back by picking someone else. Not the heir-apparent Thady, rather a working man with a true socialist outlook, a man who can speak your mind and who'll do it fearlessly. Perhaps you'll recommend him to your friends in East Limerick, always excepting Lord Petersham who must remain my pigeon?

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ON the afternoon of Dev's funeral, while having reas and buns at a Dublin hotel, my wife espied a lonely figure still in morning dress. Lord Longford. Would he join us? But certainly. We chatted about old times, his *Peace by Ordeal*, his work for prisoners, his neighbour Malcolm Muggeridge. No, he hadn't been invited to the Iveagh House reception for all the visiting celebrities though he and T.P. O'Neill were Dev's official biographers. He told us that walking hatless through Grafton Street after being at Glasnevin a woman had asked him if he was a hotel manager and did he want a job? She could fix him up, he looked so right. Longford told me he assured the woman he was just a waiter on his way to the Shelbourne. She lost interest.

Longford, the head of a family that were always friends of Ireland and the biographer of the man the nation had just buried was alone in the hotel lounge. The Protocol Section of the Department of External Affairs were all I suppose, too busy smelling round Princess Grace but then you'd never mistake her for a hot potato.

#### THE CORBALLY LASSAS

*Hoorah for the Corbally lassas,  
Their dresses are up to their asses.  
Their asses are clean,  
And fit to be seen;  
But the lads are always in chassis!  
(Especially on Sunday at Masses).*

#### HELD OVER

We regret that owing to pressure of space, the seventh part of "The Parish Pump" has been held over.

#### A VOTE OF SYMPATHY

*When Hitler died, de Valera paid "a formal call of condolence to Hempel, the German Ambassador". Not to do so, he has said, "would have been an unpardonable discourtesy to the German people and to Dr. Hempel".*

*(Michael McInerney, "Irish Times" 30/8/75).*

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# DE VALERA'S INTRANSIGENCE

For all his achievements, de Valera failed to solve the greatest problem of his own country, the reconciliation between the communities within Northern Ireland and reconciliation between North and South. An even greater paradox is that he not only failed to solve that problem, but that almost everything he did every measure he enacted in the Republic, pushed solution of that problem even further away, even making it impossible. His politics in the Republic consolidated the Republic as a separate State and consolidated partition.

That such a subtle political mind apparently was unable to grasp or understand the problem of the North is indeed the tragedy of his life and of his politics and of Ireland. Failure to understand that question could also be the reason for his failures in the social, economic and cultural fields.

He did not see any role for the North's million Protestants. They were virtually ignored, treated almost as pawns of Britain, who would, given freedom of choice or vote, opt to be Irish. When they were noticed at all it was merely to tell them the conditions, or concessions and equality which they would enjoy in an Irish Republic. In one speech in 1939 he urged that Northerners should declare their allegiance and that the country of their choice should "buy them out". How such a view of the North affected the Treaty negotiations, the Dail Debate on the Treaty, or the Civil War, is incalculable.

Apart from one statement in 1933, that the "one way to secure unity would be to build a State here that would attract the North", Mr. de Valera, before or since, did not mention the Twenty-Six County State as a factor, or instrument — or different — for a United Ireland. His 1937 Constitution declared that the State included all of Ireland. The Northerners were ignored. To him it seemed there was nothing incompatible in the stated national aims of a Republic, United Ireland and the restoration of the Irish language though to most Northern Protestants the three aims would be utterly unacceptable.

On the question of the language, indeed, one is driven to ask if the winning of a United Ireland were really Mr. de Valera's supreme aim? Once he said — at a university lecture in U.C.D. — that if he were offered freedom and unity without the restoration of the language or offered the language without unity or freedom, he would accept the language. On another occasion he told this writer that, offered a United Ireland without the language or the 26 Counties with the language, he would accept the latter.

The fundamental law contained in the de Valera Constitution of 1937 accorded a "special position" to the Roman Catholic Church and its preamble was unmistakably

Catholic. On big Catholic occasions the Church-State relationship was obvious. Protestants also had a deep grievance against the *Ne Temere* decree of the Catholic Church, which forced Protestants marrying Catholics to pledge that children of the marriage should be reared as Catholics and which de Valera, despite his relations with the Church, did little to moderate. On occasion — as in the Tilson case — Court verdicts were biased against Protestants.

All of these questions, apart from their distress to Southern Protestants, were, of course, of deep significance and relevance to the winning or losing support for Irish Unity among even the most liberal of Northern Protestants. Such laws, mostly enforced by clerical pressure, as well as Catholic Church control of education, were strong arguments for Northern Protestants conviction that Home Rule was seen to be Rome Rule in practice.

There were also decisions or actions which Northern or Southern Protestants interpreted as threats to the North's existence. In the de Valera Constitution of 1937, for instance, apart from the "special role" accorded to the Roman Catholic Church, Articles Two and Three, define the State as consisting of the whole island, including Northern Ireland and claiming a qualified jurisdiction over the North.

There was — and is — a teaching of history, and the teaching of a general culture, which produced young men — and young women — with anti-British and anti-Northern prejudices. It was a teaching which consolidated the official community culture of the "worship" of the heroic dead killed by the British; and endless commemorations of Republican I.R.A. martyrs which turned on its head Tone's plan "to abolish the memory of all past dissensions".

Despite official condemnation of I.R.A. violence when it occurred, there was the contradiction that the very first, generation of young people who were educated in a free Ireland, produced by 1938 a new style I.R.A. — the first Provisionals — who began virtually a second civil war against de Valera's government and State and against the Northern State. Many of these young men were executed by the very society which had produced them and made them what they were.

The social and cultural system in the South was one made in the image and likeness of Eamon de Valera. The State he built was Catholic and Conservative and its laws supplemented Catholic laws. It was a State that was inevitably anathema to all Northern Protestants, and though this expressed, as was often argued, the fact that its population was overwhelmingly Catholic, it inescapably deepened the division of the country made in 1922. (Michael McNerney "Irish Times" 30/8/75).

## REPLY TO TOM MORRIS

Tom Morris's concentration on the perks and privileges of the Soviet 'elite' is perhaps to be expected from one who sees himself as one of the privileged elite in this country. Perhaps he would like to expand on the perks which the position brings him and others like him here — does he possess housing which might be described as "better"? Has he repeatedly tried queuing up for treatment at the outpatients clinic of a Limerick hospital? Perhaps he avails himself of the right to speculate or invest in valuable commodities?

Gloating over shortcomings (though perhaps Tom Morris doesn't see them as shortcomings?) of the Soviet system in the U.S.S.R. is an exercise of dubious relevance to the present-day situation of the workers in Ireland. They would perhaps be more interested in knowing what rights and privileges workers have under the Soviets. The following is not intended as a eulogy of the Soviet Union as a Land of milk and honey, and a heaven on earth. The Soviet Union is not such a place, but neither is any country on earth (except perhaps for their 'elites').

To take the points mentioned by Tom Morris in the following order: holiday facilities, medical services, housing, education, and let us add the position of women.

There are rest homes and sanatoria in the countryside and at the sea, at the disposal of the trades unions and large undertakings (sometimes they belong to the undertakings themselves). Each large firm has its own clinic, with a fully qualified medical doctor and staff. Members of the trade unions (one can choose not to be a member) have the right to use these places for holidays and medical treatment at a low price, related directly to their earnings (the elite will presumably be frequenting the special clinics and resting at their 'own' country houses). In cases of prolonged illness of up to two months a worker receives a fixed percentage of his/her pay, calculated on the length of his working life, after three years — 30%, after five years — 50%, after eight years — 100%. If the illness is the result of a working e.g. industrial poisoning, full pay is given during the duration of the illness.

Medical care in the Soviet Union is free, run basically

through a system of polyclinics, where one may, indeed often have to stand in a queue (unheard of in Ireland!!). Medicines are cheap and so are spectacles, hearing aids, etc. Invalids can buy an adapted car for 30% of its value. Medical treatment places its emphasis on prophylactic work (avoiding Unions and complications) and after care. Cases of chronic infection, heart disease, etc. are inspected regularly (every month at a minimum). Treatment at home is perfectly normal and costs nothing extra.

Housing in the cities of the Soviet Union means almost exclusive flats, and, it must be admitted, not large flats by Western standards. But even the lowest-paid worker has no difficulty paying the low central heating) and electricity and gas-bills. Most flats also have a phone, which costs perhaps a few roubles a month used on local calls.

Education in the Soviet Union is free, and lasts for ten years of schooling; textbooks are cheap. Poorer families receive help with the price of school uniforms and texts.

Women in the Soviet Union receive in all cases the same pay (and presumably the same 'perks', if any apply) as the men for doing similar work, and they are found in all jobs and professions. They have equal rights with their husbands to all joint property. Pregnant women can take off from work (nearly all women work) 56 days before the birth and 56 days after on full pay, with no penalties involved. She has a full right to return to her previous post if complications keep her away from work for a longer period. While still feeding her child, she has the right to take frequent breaks from her work to fulfil her maternal duties.

Once again, each large undertaking has a nursery and

kindergarten when working mothers can leave their children. City and local authorities run nurseries and kindergartens. Charges depend on a couple's earnings.

Finally, let us consider the two quotes from Tom Morris's article:

"There are limits to what a man can do with the money in a country where speculation is a crime and investment in valuable commodities like *real estate*, jewellery and antiques nearly impossible. Of far greater value are the privileges which the elite enjoys".

Contrast: "Low death duties — only 10% — make it easy for any family that has accumulated wealth to pass it on — a powerful weapon in the hands of those families who can be sure of lasting political favour".

Where is the elite to get its accumulated wealth? It possesses in most cases no more than the right to one certain advantageous activities, a right which in all cases accompanies the fulfilling of the duties of a particular post. The passing-on of a state or party post to one's civil heir is quite unheard of (Ireland does not here, perhaps, provide a clear parallel) and is liable to prove impossible for a long time in a country where exit from active politics has normally been associated with disgrace and consequent loss of most privileges. Accumulation of private possessions cannot be converted by the individual into capital investment for the reproduction of more wealth and influence.

Meanwhile though he may not prove an automatic washing machine, the Soviet worker has one 'perk' which is lacking over here. He has security of employment.

## CONTRACEPTION IN LIMERICK

The contraception controversy has had a short history in Limerick. Hysterical headlines, angry allegations, and charges of gutter journalism, have all played a part in the issue.

Ironically enough, the story begins quietly, by the banks of the Shannon at Plassey. The scene is the campus of the National Institute for Higher Education, and the time is December 1974.

A curious reporter discovers that the College has its own Family Planning Advice Centre. It caters for the 800 students on the campus and gives them advice and information on family planning facilities available in Ireland.

It is pointed out that information leaflets are not forced into the hands of any student. The Service is there for the students and it is up to them to avail of it.

The students themselves are careful to comment on the Centre and the newspaper report ends by saying that it is maybe a sign of Limerick's conservatism that the family planning action had to come from a group of young people.

Before this the only public mention of family planning had come from Socialist Jim Kemmy, who listed it as a basic civil and human right during his campaign for a seat on the Limerick City Council. The fact that he was elected with a massive vote lends weight to the theory that people privately agreed with his public views on the once taboo subject of contraception.

However, as if to counteract the growing trend favouring the legalisation of contraception, the Catholic clergy of Limerick through its Diocesan Office, began to insert some interesting paragraphs in the local newspaper. These asked about marriage problems, and believe it or not, family planning. The planning they had in mind, however, was the so called "natural" methods. A few months later, Fr. James Good, writing in *Hibernia*, tore apart the subtle distinction. The fact that he lived in Limerick added extra sting to the blow.

The controversy died down somewhat until June 1975 when the Southill Tenants' Association passed a resolution urging the setting up of a family planning clinic in the housing area catering for over 1,000 homes.

A news team from the *Sunday World* came down and in an article described the area as "Pillhill". This seemed to arouse all kinds of vengeance-seeking emotions in the local Community

Council. Some press statements and articles saw Council spreading its wings, with its public relations, officers issuing statements from all the bodies and associations affiliated to it denouncing the *Sunday World* and "artificial" contraception.

This cut no ice with the *Sunday World*. The paper saw through the Council's act and accordingly dismissed the many, "angry", outraged and "shocked" complaints saying that they bordered on the hysterical.

"There appears to be a highly organised campaign by anti-contraception advocates to prevent a family planning clinic being set up in the area", commented the newspaper, correctly assessing the mood of the Community Council, which because it has influential clerical and religious members, could predictably enough, be expected to react in the way most pleasing to the clergy.

Shortly afterwards, on the first anniversary of his election to the City Council, Jim Kemmy called a public meeting to discuss the idea of establishing a family planning clinic for Limerick.

The meeting was well supported and the names of people willing to help were listed for future reference. Three speakers from the Irish Family Planning Association attended and outlined their policies and difficulties to the meeting.

Some opposition might have been expected at the meeting but this did not materialise. The city of Limerick laid easy in its bed, and the "outraged" "disgusted" and "shocked" posturings of the Southill Community Council were quietly forgotten, and its allegations of "gutter journalists" rang hollow over the city of Church spires.

Last month came the latest episode in the family planning controversy in Limerick. The Catholic Bishop, Dr. Newman, who has spent many of his years behind the walls of Maynooth, came out against the establishment of a family planning clinic in Limerick. Wisely, he said that if one were established there was nothing he could do, except tell the Catholic people to stay away. There it is — the simple solution. Yes, it is all so easy when you live in a palace, and don't have to support a wife and a number of young kids on the Dole. What about those people who want and need a safe, reliable, family planning method? Let's hope that before long it will be available to them in Limerick.

# THE CATHOLIC CHURCH & NAZI GERMANY

## PART ONE

On January 30th 1933 Hitler became Chancellor of the German Republic. On March 23rd. he gave a policy statement in which he promised amongst other things to work for the peaceful relations between Church and State. Five days later, the German Catholic episcopate, organised in the Fulda bishop's conference, withdrew their earlier prohibitions against membership of the "Nazi" party and admonished the faithful to be loyal to the new regime.

These dates are important in describing how the Catholic Church reacted to German Nazism and also the relationship between the Church and State from 1933 until the end of World War II in 1945. (Most of the information used in this article is taken from a book entitled "The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany" by Guenter Lewy).

Under the Weimar Republic, the Catholic Church had prospered and, by the end of the twenties, there were over 20,000 priests for 20 million Catholics in the country. By 1933, the "Catholic Youth of Germany" had a membership of 1½ million. There were also many other large and well organised associations for Catholics in existence around that time. Not only then was there a large percentage of Catholics but they organised in a strong and influential movement. By 1939, 43% of the German Reichstag (the legislature) were Catholics and another interesting fact is that 22.7% of the S.S. (Security Unit and Gestapo) were Catholics.

Catholic support for the Nazi's did not begin at the outbreak of the war for, as early as 1920, a group of Catholics in Berlin had founded a Catholic league for patriotic politics. They called for a fight against Marxists, Jews and Freemasons. Later there were calls by the episcopate for Catholics to join the Nazis to stamp out the Marxists. This is probably one of the reasons the Church first became involved with the Nazis but as Hitler's policies became more repressive and inflicted more terror and destruction on the Jews and other minorities the German episcopate, up until the down fall of Hitler, never openly condemned any of the policies of the regime.

The one exception was that of euthanasia. In 1941, Bishop Galen of Munster delivered a sermon denouncing euthanasia in the strongest possible terms; this protest spread like wildfire and shortly afterwards the euthanasia programme was officially halted. Here was an example of the forceful reaction of the Catholic Church halting a programme of Hitler's, even when he was at the zenith of his military power. Had the Church shown a similar response against other crimes of the Nazi regime, committed on an even greater scale, such as the extermination of the Jews of Europe, the results might well have been different.

In 1934, a Father Senn hailed Hitler as the "tool of God", called forth to overcome Judaism. The German episcopate, although fully aware of the systematic atrocities inflicted on the Jews by the Nazis, repeatedly refused to take a public stand on the matter.

The channels open to the bishops to acquire this information were many. One source of information was a Colonel Kurt Gerstein who joined the S.S. in 1942 to investigate stories of the extermination of people. He tried to tell the Papal Nuncio in Berlin about a gassing he had witnessed near Lublin. The Papal Nuncio refused to see him but he told his story to Dr. Winter, legal advisor to Bishop Preysing of Berlin, and several other influential persons.

In the few cases where the episcopate spoke out against some of the other horrible events such as the compulsory dissolution of "racially mixed marriages" the Church's criticisms were often made tongue in cheek and, in the words of a Nazi official of the time, "The population pays scant attention to such involved pronouncements burdened with stipulations". (This quotation is taken from a report of Ambassador Weizacker, German Ambassador to the Holy See.).

An indication of the state of affairs at this time can be seen from the Vatican's attitude. Its official organ, *L'Osservatore*

*Romano*, prominently published on October 25 and 26th, a communique on the Pope's charitable actions. The communique, written in the Vatican's distinctive style, in suitably vague and complicated language declares that all men without distinction of nationality, race or religion would benefit from the Pope's paternal solicitude. The message is remarkable for what it omits rather than what it contains and only a small number of people would, after careful scrutiny, recognise a special allusion to the Jewish question.

There were, of course, exceptions, for whom Christian duty to one's neighbour amounted to more than a pious formula. One was the 66-year old Provost Lichtenberg of Berlin who right through the stepped up anti-Semitic agitation continued to say a daily prayer for the Jews. He was arrested on October 23rd 1941. Having been shipped off by the Gestapo to a concentration camp in 1943, he died in transit on November 5th, 1943.

When the American troops reached Dachau concentration camp in 1945, 326 priests were being held there, and a larger number had already died there. Soon afterwards, Pope Pius XII invoked those figures in an effort to show that the Church had strongly resisted the Nazi regime. Yet up until the end of the war, Catholics who fought against the Hitler regime were rebels not only against the State, but also against their ecclesiastical authorities as well.

Many other examples of the words and actions of the Church authorities can be cited. In June, 1936, Bishop Berning of Osnabruck, a member of the Prussian State Council, visited a number of concentration camps in the diocese. Addressing the inmates of one camp, Berning reminded them of their duty of obedience and fidelity towards the people and state that was demanded by their religious faith. In a talk to the camp guards, the bishop was reported to have praised their work in the camp and to have ended with three "Sieg Heil" cheers for Furher and Fatherland. Later, in an article in the Dutch weekly newspaper *Der Deutsche Weg*, Father Fiedrick Muckermann, after having verified the facts of the visits with the Osnabruck chancery, commented in a tone of desperation:

*We face the shocking truth that the only word which a German bishop until today has publicly said about the barbarities of the concentration camps is a word of glorification of Hitler and of a system that has brought about these barbarities.*

Hitler's imperialistic aims were clearly stated in "Mein Kampf". The Church not only looked the other way but actually helped him in his intentions. The first and decisive intervention on behalf of the Church occurred on the plebiscite of the Saar territory, which under the peace treaty of Versailles had put the Saar territory under the rule of a commission representing the League of Nations. The intervention took the form of a declaration issued by Bishop Gale of Munster. An extract from it reads: *On Sunday, January, 1st, a plebiscite will be held in the Saar Territory on the question whether this German land and its people shall remain under the separation from the German Reich forced upon them by the dictated peace of Versailles. As German Catholics we are duty bound to stand up for the greatness, welfare and peace of our Fatherland. Our most effective help is prayer. We, therefore, order that on said Sunday in all our Churches, three "Lords prayers" and "Ave Marias" be recited in order to implore for a result of the Saar plebiscite that will bring blessings for our German people.*

When the ballots had been returned and the results had shown that over 90% had chosen union with Germany, no small credit was due to the Catholic Church, which had such a great influence in that area.

If the Church's history is carefully examined it will be found that its behaviour in Nazi Germany was not an isolated case but was firmly rooted in its concern for its institutional interests, rather than in a belief in freedom and justice for all men.

(To be concluded).